

Additional Turkey Cooking Methods

Scottie Misner and Evelyn Whitmer

Microwave Cooking

When microwaving a turkey, check the owner's manual for the size bird that will fit in your oven, as well as the time and power level to use. Using a microwave cooking bag ensures the most even cooking. Smaller turkeys, 12-14 pounds are the maximum size allowed for most microwave ovens. Allow 3" oven clearance on top and 2-3" of space around the bird. Do not stuff the turkey. Cook the turkey by itself.

The turkey needs to reach a minimum internal temperature of 165° F in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast before removing it from the oven. Let the bird stand for 20 minutes after removing it from the microwave before it is carved.

Barbecue Grill

Turkey parts can be cooked on a barbecue grill. A whole turkey or turkey parts can be cooked in a covered kettle grill. Charcoal makes a good, hot fire. Try lining the grill with heavy-duty aluminum foil to aid even cooking and easy cleanup. Stack the coals in a pyramid and follow the directions on the lighter fluid. Once the coals are white-hot, spread them to form an even layer. Be sure racks are 6 to 8 inches from the embers for an even heat without too much intensity. Add new coal to maintain a temperature of 225-300 ° F. Small turkey quarter roasts are excellent for this method of cooking. Young fryer-roaster turkeys, weighing 6 to 8 pounds, can be cut into individual servings. The turkey pieces will take at least an hour to cook, depending on their size and thickness. Turn them occasionally while they are cooking; if they start to char, raise the grill farther from the heat.

The turkey needs to reach a minimum internal temperature of 165° F in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast before removing it from the grill. Let the bird stand for 20 minutes after removing it from the grill before it is carved.

Covered Grill

Arrange charcoal on both sides of the fire bowl with a drip pan in the center of the coals. If your grill only has one burner, place a pan of water under the grate to create heat. If your grill has many burners, place the turkey away from the flames. This can be done by turning off one of the burners and placing the turkey over the off burner. Place a whole turkey on a rack over the drip pan and cover the grill. Add a few briquettes to each side of the drip pan every hour. To give it a hickory or mesquite smoked flavor, sprinkle one-half of a cup of water-soaked hickory or mesquite chips or flakes over the coals during the last half hour of cooking. If you prefer a heavier hickory-smoked flavor, add more chips or flakes.

You should allow 15 to 18 minutes per pound for an unstuffed turkey cooked on a covered grill. For a stuffed turkey, allow 18 to 24 minutes per pound.

Whole, unstuffed turkeys can also be cooked on a special rotisserie that turns the meat slowly on a rotary spit over direct heat. Since rotisseries vary greatly, follow the directions that come with the appliance. Before turning on the spit, be sure to balance and mount the bird so that it does not slip as the spit turns.

References

- Abgrall, Mary & S. Misner, Additional Turkey Cooking Methods, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. June 1998.
- Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, Food Safety of Turkey...from Farm to Table http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Turkey_from_Farm_to_Table/index.asp, April 2006
- Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA, Turkey: Alternate Routes to the Table. http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Turkey_Alt_Routes/index.asp#3, October 2006
- Butterball, Plan, Prep and Serve. http://www.butterball.com/en/main_canvas.jsp?includePage=plannprep_home.jsp&t=Plan%20%27n%20Prep&s0=plan_n_prep&s1=,2006.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85721

SCOTTIE MISNER, PH.D., R.D.
Associate Nutrition Specialist, Department of Nutritional Sciences

EVELYN WHITMER, M. ED.
Assistant Agent, Family & Consumer Sciences, Cochise County

CONTACT:
EVELYN WHITMER
emarkee@ag.arizona.edu

This information has been reviewed by university faculty.
cals.arizona.edu/pubs/health/az1091.pdf

Originally published: 2007

Other titles from Arizona Cooperative Extension can be found at:
cals.arizona.edu/pubs

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Economic Development & Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Arizona.

The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities.